

effective environments

designing innovative solutions for success



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What Makes a NEW Year? Having 2002 Be Truly Extraordinary

We tend to chuckle about New Years' resolutions — they so rarely make a decisive difference in our long-term actions and results. We smile tolerantly at the resolutions of others and wonder about our own ability to make them work. Yet, we often seem drawn to make resolutions at the start of each new year. There is something irresistible about the idea of a fresh start — a reminder that the rest of life begins NOW and that the future is really ours to invent. New Year's resolutions seem like our avenue to success — to having things be different and to having them go our way.

The idea is sound; it's the implementation that could use some tweaking. The problem with resolutions is twofold: They often lack inspiration, having been said to "fix a problem" rather than "fulfill a vision." And, they are resolutions, marked by grim determination, a line in the sand that must never be crossed. By definition, they often call for

perfection and the first sign of failure is an indication that we cannot attain our goal or fulfill our intention.

Are you ready to invent a 2002 that reflects what really matters to you? Are you interested in living this year inside a design that inspires you and that supports you in having, at year end, a sense of profound accomplishment? If so, consider this:

Set the past aside.

Pause and reflect on all that you accomplished in the last year. How have you grown? What did you learn? Who did you support, and who supported you? Recognize what you did NOT accomplish, although you thought you would, and allow yourself to be at peace with that.

Use your imagination.

Allow yourself to imagine all the ways you could make this next year a great year. The

possibilities are limitless. You won't want or need to choose ALL of the possibilities; however, it's useful to have a broad spectrum from which to make a selection.

Choose accomplishments, not "shoulds."

In designing this next year of your life, identify where you want to focus. Select endeavors that represent, for you, genuine accomplishment — a profound sense of satisfaction and a sense of having life move in the direction of your dreams. If the areas of focus you select seem to be uninspiring, either because they merely continue or maintain the past or because they are burdensome or predictable, choose again. Even a project that "should" be done may have another, inspiring reason being done! Choose as accomplishments only what inspires you and seems genuinely worthwhile to you — even irresistible.

Complete a yearly design.

The secret to a successful year begins with your design of desirable outcomes. This is your opportunity to say, in advance, by what criteria you will measure this year at the end of it. What do you want to be able to say? Be sure that the list you make reflects all areas of your life where you mean to make something happen this year. Your list is complete when, as you look at it, you can say that if ONLY those things were accomplished, you would be delighted and deeply satisfied.

Invent practices to support fulfillment.

Once you are clear how you want the year to turn out, consider what you need in order to ensure these outcomes. In some cases, there may be specific resources to be marshaled, a plan to create, a team to assemble. Sometimes, the real accomplishment will unfold as you discover and adopt new practices that gradually build good health, great relationships, effective work habits, etc.

Look to see if there are some specific practices that would support you in having the successful year you envision. This exercise is highly personal: Only you can say what you would really find useful. Moreover, only you have the

answer to the question, "What kind of structure or support will make the difference in my actually adopting this practice?" Imagine yourself, for example, effortlessly and regularly including physical activity in your life. Then, explain to yourself how that happened. Your response will reveal volumes about the structure you will want to put in place to support yourself. Such structures may take human form (a coach, buddy, partner, or "cheering section"). In other cases, strategically placed reminders, time scheduled in a calendar to engage in an activity or practice, or invented ways to make things more fun can all play a role.

Don't be discouraged if your new practice takes some time to become automatic. Keep taking the next step, find the lessons to be learned in each "slip" and celebrate each and every accomplishment.

A final word

Business guru Peter Drucker has said, "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." In designing your year, you will not eliminate spontaneity or the pleasure of the journey. Rather, you will give yourself a place to stand, to live the life you mean to live and to take pleasure in what you are building as you go.

Happy New Year!

A Quick Question...

We are happy to send this newsletter quarterly to all of you who wish to receive it. We are

committed to providing something that will be useful to you. Please let us know (by fax, phone, email or mail) if you would like to continue receiving this newsletter!

The Art and Science of Projects

Project methodology and principles are key for achieving results. Projects empower you to clarify, structure, manage and win at what you set out to accomplish as an organization or as an individual. The power of a project lies in the nature of projects:

A project has a clear result to be produced,

A project exists in time — it has a beginning, a middle and an end,

A project has clear steps to be taken and a plan for taking them, and

A project can be managed.

Formulating, designing and managing projects gives you access to critical tools for moving with velocity and averting overwhelm.

Anything — any commitment, goal or intention — can be treated as a project. Using the technology of projects, you can accomplish anything. This technology allows you to “see the way through” and makes the project (commitment, intention, goal) doable.

For an organization, a common approach or methodology around projects has the added benefit of creating a common way of thinking about results and how to achieve them. We have made our **effective environments** project approach available to many organizations.

We will be conducting our Projects Management workshop for nonprofit organizations on April 9 through The Resource Center for Nonprofits. You can obtain more information on their web site: **www.volunteernow.org**. Click on The Resource Center for Nonprofits. Or, you can call Jean Bertelsen at (707) 573-3399.

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